

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 02684 171429Z

61

ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02

STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-11 OIC-02 SS-15

NSC-05 L-03 /092 W

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 775

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

ALL EC CAPITALS 1853

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU

SUBJECT: ICFTU AND LATIN AMERICA

REF: EC BRUSSELS 2581

1. SUMMARY: THE STATUS OF ORIT, A BURNING ISSUE A FEW MONTHS AGO, WAS NOT DISCUSSED IN THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE RECENT ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD

MEETING IN LUXEMBOURG. THE MATTER WAS REVIEWED AT A MARCH 12 LUNCHEON ATTENDED BY LATIN AMERICAN EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS, ICFTU SECRETARIAT

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PAGE 02 EC BRU 02684 171429Z

OFFICIALS AND ORIT GENERAL SECRETARY ETCHEVERRY BUT ACCORDING TO MISSION SOURCES NO CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED. THE ORIT STEERING

COMMITTEE, WHICH WAS SET UP TO ORGANIZE THE EXTRAORDINARY ORIT CONGRESS NOW SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST, WILL MEET IN LATE MAY IN MEXICO CITY. THE ARGENTINE CGT HAS PRESENTED A FORMULA FOR REORGANIZING ORIT. THE PROBLEM OF FINANCING THE EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS HAS RAISED SOME DOUBTS ABOUT ITS BEING HELD. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENT CONCERNING LATIN AMERICA AT THE MARCH 11-12 ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, WAS THE FACT THAT THE ORIT ISSUE WAS NOT EVEN DISCUSSED DURING THE PLENARY SESSIONS. ORIT GENERAL SECRETARY ETCHEVERRY GAVE A ROUTINE REPORT ON ORIT ACTIVITIES AND ARGENTINE CGT LEADER CARRANZA MADE HIS MAIDEN SPEECH AS A BOARD MEMBER, WHICH WAS WELL RECEIVED BUT OTHERWISE DEVOID OF REFERENCE TO ORIT REORGANIZATION. MOST ICFTU OBSERVERS ARE INTERPRETING THIS AS A PLANNED EFFORT TO DE-EMPHASIZE ICFTU DIFFERENCES WITH THE AFL-CIO OVER LATIN AMERICA.

3. DURING A MARCH 12 LUNCHEON ATTENDED BY CARRANZA, ETCHEVERRY AND MALAVE VILLABA OF THE VENEZUELAN CTV, ICFTU SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS VANDERVECKEN AND LOPEZ REAL AND ICFTU GENEVA REPRESENTATIVE AGUIRIANO, THE EXTRAORDINARY ORIT CONGRESS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN CARACAS NEXT AUGUST WAS DISCUSSED AT SOME LENGTH. THERE IS NOW APPARENTLY CONSIDERABLE CONCERN ABOUT THE FINANCING OF THE CONGRESS. ETCHEVERRY SAID THAT THE CTV AND ICFTU ARE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE 7 AND 5 THOUSAND DOLLARS RESPECTIVELY TOWARD UNDERWRITING THE CONGRESS, BUT ETCHEVERRY INFORMED THE ICFTU OFFICIALS THAT THIS FALLS CONSIDERABLY SHORT OF THE AMOUNT NEEDED. HE TOLD US THAT THE CONGRESS MAY NOT BE HELD UNLESS THE ICFTU OR CTV DECIDES TO CONTRIBUTE ADDITIONAL FUNDS (AMOUNT UNSPECIFIED). MEXICAN CTM LEADER VELASQUEZ, DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE LUNCHEON. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED TO LUXEMBOURG BY HIS WIFE AND SON AND, ACCORDING TO ONE MISSION SOURCE, SEEMED MORE INTERESTED IN TOURISM THAN IN THE BOARD MEETING.

4. ACCORDING TO ETCHEVERRY, THE ARGENTINE CGT HAS PROPOSED A FORMULA FOR REORGANIZING THE ORIT WHICH IS BASED ON FORMING THREE REGIONS AS FOLLOWS: REGION I, UNITED STATES, CANADA, MEXICO AND PUERTO RICO WITH HEADQUARTERS IN MEXICO CITY; REGION II, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WITH HEADQUARTERS TO BE DETERMINED; AND REGION III, ALL OF SOUTH AMERICA WITH HEADQUARTERS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 03 EC BRU 02684 171429Z

IN BUENOS AIRES. THE CGT FORMULA ALSO CALLS FOR CHANGING THE NAME OF ORIT, WHICH HISTORICALLY HAS BEEN ANATHEMA TO THE PERONIST MOVEMENT. IT IS CONSIDERED HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THESE PROPOSALS WILL BE GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. WE DID NOT DISCUSS THE ARGENTINE FORMULA WITH CARRANZA, BUT HE DID REFER TO THE CGT GOAL OF JOINING THE AFL-CIO IN A CONTINENT-WIDE ORGANIZATION AS BEING A CORNERSTONE OF PRESENT CGT-INTERNATIONAL POLICY.

5. THE STEERING COMMITTEE, WHICH WAS SET UP DURING THE ICFTU'S WORLD CONGRESS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ORGANIZING THE SPECIAL ORIT

EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS, IS SCHEDULED TO MEET IN LATE MAY IN MEXICO CITY. THE AFL-CIO'S MCLELLAN IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE.

6. COMMENT: MOST ICFTU OBSERVERS ARE INTERPRETING THE RELEGATION OF THE ORIT ISSUE TO BACK BURNER STATUS AT THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, AS A CONSCIOUS EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE ICFTU LEADERSHIP TO DEFUSE THE ISSUE. AMONG SEVERAL KEY FACTORS WHICH ARE UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTING TO THIS SHIFT IS THE ILO CRISIS WHICH HAS AFFECTED CHANGES IN BASIC ICFTU ATTITUDES TOWARD THE AFL-CIO. THE RESENTMENT OF MOST ICFTU LEADERS OVER THE US NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW HAS NOT DIMINISHED, BUT REALIZATION THAT THE US WILL INDEED PULL OUT IF PROGRESS IS NOT MADE TOWARD RESTORING THE ILO TO ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSES HAS DRAWN THEM RELUCTANTLY CLOSER TO THE AMERICANS IN A COMMON SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION. DOING BATTLE OVER LATIN AMERICA WOULD NOT HELP THE ILO CAUSE.

7. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PLAYING DOWN OF THE ORIT ISSUE IS THE FACT THAT THE EUROPEANS LEARNED IN MEXICO LAST OCTOBER THAT THE LATIN AMERICANS, DESPITE THEIR GROUSING ABOUT AMERICAN DOMINATION, REJECT EUROPEAN INTERVENTION IN "AMERICAN" AFFAIRS; THAT IN FACT THERE WAS LITTLE THAT THEY AS OUTSIDERS COULD DO ABOUT THE ORIT SITUATION. COUPLED WITH THIS EUROPEAN MISCALCULATION WAS THE AFL-CIO INITIATIVE IN SCANDINAVIA WHICH HAS CENTERED ON GEORGE MEANY'S MEETINGS WITH THE TOP LEVEL LEADERS OF THE NORDIC UNIONS. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THESE LEADERS FEEL ANY BETTER ABOUT AFL-CIO POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO CHILE, BUT MEANY'S ONE-ON-ONE APPROACH TO THESE LEADERS SEEMS TO HAVE HAD SOME POSITIVE IMPACT ON AFL-CIO-NORDIC RELATIONS. PERHAPS AT ANOTHER POINT IN TIME THE ICFTU WILL AGAIN ATTEMPT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT AFL-CIO HEGEMONY IN ITS LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION, BUT FOR NOW, IT WOULD
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PAGE 04 EC BRU 02684 171429Z

APPEAR THAT EUROPEAN ENTHUSIASM FOR FORCING A CHANGE, WHICH WAS NURTURED WITH THE FALL OF ALLENDE, IS CLEARLY WANING. HINTON

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